Dedicated to the Readers

Copyright Page

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GREEN PLANET

M. THOMAS PENN

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Copyright Page 2

The Ant Spaceship 8

Numbers in the Cube 10

Change 12

Marul Joe’s Arrival 13

In Ankara 16

Gökhan’s Childhood 17

Joe’s Mouse 19

Selim, Gökhan, and Can Leave the Ship 20

Brain 24

A Three-Thousand-Year-Old Brain 28

Smell 30

Henry’s Discovery 32

Gökhan’s Memories 35

Red Planet 46

Novel 48

Tremor 56

Collection of Beautiful Words 59

Landing in the Mud 62

Mud 64

Sound 71

Cave 74

Pen Robot 75

Cleaner..... 78

Botanical Garden..... 79

Park..... 86

The Inventor’s Story 93

What's Happening on the Ship 97

Escape from the Pit 98

The Arrival of the Bear 103

In the Cave..... 111

Pain 114

Leave Me Alone 116

On the Ship 120

Negative Things.....122

C 20 Ship 124

The Big Surprise 129

Captain Erol’s Death 132

If You Care for It 135

Return to Earth 139

The End of the Journey 144

THE ANT SPACESHIP

The Ant spaceship had a crew of three: Selim, Gökhan, and Can.

Can was the captain, while Selim and Gökhan were crew members responsible for coordinating the ship’s operations.

As the Ant traversed the vast expanse of space, its tasks were managed by automated robots under command. Most of these robots were in rest mode.

Captain Can announced, “Friends! I’ve set the ship’s course on autopilot. Let’s head to the rest capsules”

The rest capsules were programmed to sustain the vital functions of any living being inside them—breathing, nourishment, all tailored to the occupant’s needs.

Selim sighed, “Ah! How I’d love to be on a ship sailing the sea right now, sleeping there”

Gökhan agreed, “I’m all for sleeping. We’re exhausted. How many years has it been since we left Earth? Space is so vast. They used to talk about it in astronomy classes, and I’d wonder, ‘Really?’ It’s beyond anything they could describe—immense beyond imagination”

Can replied, “Gökhan! What are you saying? Even Earth is enormous. I used to think about it on the bus from Maraş to Ankara. Looking out the window, I’d say to myself, ‘It’s all just soil.’ Everywhere I looked—soil. Imagine

billions of grains of earth… You know, soil comes from the crumbling of countless rocks”

Selim marveled, “How astonishing! Eating is astonishing. Drinking water is astonishing. Oh, Lord! May our end be astonishing too”

Can recited, “I love this poem by Necip Fazıl from Maraş: ‘The cat spinning around its tail is in awe. The scholar with no awe is in futile effort’”

The spaceship continued toward its new course. Soon, the crew entered their rest capsules and fell asleep.

The ship’s operations were left to the automated robots, which began receiving signals from far, far away.

NUMBERS IN THE CUBE

The captain robot overseeing the ship’s command announced.

“We’re receiving a signal from a distance”

The co-pilot robot asked.

“Should we open the message?”

The signal was coming from the ship’s northern direction, arriving in rapid succession.

The captain robot hesitated, “I’m unsure. In today’s world, there’s an overwhelming amount of information pollution. We need to filter and choose carefully”

The co-pilot agreed.

“You’re right, Captain. Even humans are so selective. When they go shopping for clothes, they scrutinize everything, think it over, sometimes waver in indecision. They spend ages over a single garment, wandering from store to store”

The captain robot decided to consult the robots managing the ship’s navigation.

The robots responsible for fuel and safety chimed in, “There are no life centers in this region, but it could be a distress signal”

One robot suggested.

“Why don’t we send a vehicle outside the ship? Let it open the message”

The idea was approved. A small, multi-purpose capsule detached from the ship. Once it was far enough away, it received the signal. Instantly, the signal transformed into a holographic sphere inside the capsule, covered in countless numbers.

The co-pilot reported.

“Captain! The signal is a spherical message with numbers all over it”

The captain ordered.

“Display it on the screen”

The captain and the robots gazed at the screen. The numbers on the sphere were a computer program. The captain and the engine robots began analyzing the numbers…

CHANGE

On the Ant spaceship, the captain and the robots watched the numbers on the sphere as if they were spectators at a football match on TV.

The numbers grew larger, then vanished.

Moments later, the eyes of the captain and the robots changed. They had all been reprogrammed in different ways, unaware of the alteration.

The captain ordered.

“Retrieve the capsule we sent out”

The capsule was brought back through the ship’s opening doors. The crew sent a message to the source of the signal.

Far, far away, the sender and receiver of that signal was Joe—a space pirate.

Joe hijacked sturdy ships in space, selling them for profit, living off his piracy.

Meanwhile, the ship reprogrammed itself to obey its new captors.

Marul Joe—nicknamed “Lettuce Joe” for his love of eating green leafy lettuce every day—and his crew approached the Ant spaceship.

MARUL JOE’S ARRIVAL

Marul Joe and his crew arrived at the Ant spaceship. The ship’s automated robots greeted them.

Robots, after all, act according to whoever programs them.

Henry, Joe’s closest companion, said.

“Joe! How many spoils is this now? Let this be the last. Let’s return to Earth.”

Henry had roamed space extensively and missed World. From space, World seemed a little more.

HENRY’S CONCERN

Henry:

“Marul Joe! Money, money, money! How far will this go? We should enjoy what we’ve earned; we’re constantly running around. ‘This is mine, that’s mine…’ Whether it’s one planet or two, There’s no end to acquiring wealth. I’m talking to you, Marul Joe!

Do you hear me? Do you understand?” he said.

Joe glanced at Henry sideways.

Joe:

“You’re right, Henry. Fine, let this be our last job. Then, off we go to Earth” he said.

One of the automated robots approached Marul Joe:

“There are three human passengers on the ship,” it said.

Joe paused for a moment.

“Three humans?”

Joe asked the robot:

“Where are they?”

The robot replied:

“They’re in the sleep cabins, set to sleep mode for about a month”

Joe:

“Send them to Earth in their sleep cabins” he said.

Henry:

“World was cloudy, but it’s far more beautiful than this dark space—there are rivers, there are trees” he said.

There was someone on the ship that Henry and Joe hadn’t accounted for. It was the pen robot.

IN ANKARA

In sleep mode, Can recalled his youthful days in Ankara.

On Saturdays in Ankara, he’d go to the Hacı Bayram Mosque.

It was early in the morning. Being young, Can didn’t quite know what to do with himself, but his days in Ankara were filled with walking.

He walked along roads. He walked along avenues.

Images flickered in and out.

Can slipped back into deep sleep in sleep mode.

GOKHAN’S CHILDHOOD

Gökhan began to recall memories from his childhood.

After all, experiences leave a mark on every person.

The Ant spaceship traveled alongside spinning galaxies.

The galaxies rotated in a magnificent way.

No deviation, no slippage.

Magnificent beyond measure.

In none of the galaxy’s spheres was there any spilling,

No scattering, no discord.

This was a clear testament to a supreme power.

As a child, Gökhan used to spin a top. The nail at the tip of the top spun, and the round body attached to it spun on the wooden surface.

Gökhan drew colorful rings around the top and on its surface with colored pencils. Concentric colored circles formed atop it.

Once the drawing was complete, he wrapped the string around the top’s nail with his index finger and launched it downward onto the ground. The top began to spin. The colors on it spun too. More than the top itself, the

spinning colors captivated the children’s attention.

Everyone watched this festival of colors.

Years later, Gökhan now gazed at the spinning galaxies in space, a spectacle to behold. He watched the reddish and bluish dust clouds rotate with admiration.

As he observed the turning galaxies, his eyelids grew heavy, and he fell back asleep.

JOE’S MOUSE

Joe had a trusty mouse he communicated with. Joe understood the mouse’s language. This mouse had explored parts of the Ant spaceship, climbing onto Joe’s shoulder to whisper important findings into his ear.

One of the things it told Joe about was the pen robot, kept in a separate section.

Joe’s eyes widened when he heard about the pen robot. “What?” he said, looking into his mouse’s eyes. The mouse stood upright, sniffing the air. A faint smell of burning wafted in.

SELİM, GÖKHAN, AND CAN LEAVE THE SHIP

The weakness of the automated robots was numbers. Some might have a vulnerability, and that weak spot needed to be patched beforehand. Otherwise, in a flood or storm, harm could come to people. If cracks in houses aren't repaired in advance, cold winds blow in during autumn and winter, dust creeps in, and in mud or rain, water seeps through. Belongings get dirty. The automated robots' vulnerability was numbers too.

The numbers in the transmitted sphere had altered their programming. Now, the ship's original crew—Captain Can and his companions—were placed in sleep capsules inside a smaller vessel, programmed to head toward Earth.

All preparations were complete.

Henry arrived for inspection.

He asked the robots:

"Have you completed all the procedures?"

The robots answered, "Yes"

Henry:

“Good. You can leave. I’ll handle the launch myself” he said.

The robots departed.

As soon as they left, Henry altered the ship’s settings.

He reprogrammed the vessel to head toward the “ASOR” planet.

Henry muttered to himself:

“Oh, I know these guys well. They’re loyal to their duties. Even if they go to Earth, they’ll come back to find this ship entrusted to them. They’ll do whatever it takes to track us down”

Henry continued adjusting the settings. He reduced the fuel for the departing ship and disabled its communication systems.

As he worked, he spoke aloud:

“Oh, the Japanese! Oh! A nation with a small population, yet in the eighteenth century, they defeated a colossal nation like the Chinese. Whichever nation adorns itself with universal values succeeds on a global scale.

There was that Japanese general—so successful in the nineteenth century. He even visited Istanbul once” he said.

Henry pressed the keys with his fingers as he spoke.

“The procedures are complete. Now we can send off our passengers”

The ship’s launch sequence began.

A sound echoed from the hangar:

“Three minutes until the launch of Butterfly One.

Please clear the area”

Hearing the announcement, Henry exited Butterfly One.

He sealed the hatches and the door. After a few steps, he climbed the stairs and watched as the hangar’s doors opened into space.

The hangar doors were opening.

The announcement system continued:

“Twenty seconds until the launch of Butterfly One.

…

10.

9.”

The hangar doors fully opened, revealing the breathtaking expanse of space. Stars and nebulae glimmered in the distance.

The yellow and white lights of Butterfly One flashed on and off.

The vehicle retracted the legs holding it to the ground.

3

2

1

Butterfly One lifted off.

Slowly, it moved past the hangar doors, separating from the ship.

Butterfly One was now in space.

Its three passengers were in deep sleep,

BRAIN

The purple lights of the sleep cabins glowed softly. Everything had been meticulously considered in the design of the cabins.

The human body had numerous systems—skeletal, muscular, nervous, digestive… The harmonious functioning of such complex systems together was nothing short of magnificent.

In one of the sleep cabins, Selim Hoca was reading a book about the brain. While in sleep mode, his brain summoned memories from the past.

As Selim Hoca read the book about the brain, he asked himself.

“How can I explain this to the children?”

The brain’s structure, divided into three parts, its lobes… These weren’t concepts children could easily grasp. They weren’t at that level yet.

Selim Hoca made up his mind—he would introduce the brain to his students. When he entered the classroom, the children looked at their teacher attentively.

Selim Hoca:

“Children! I have a question for you” he said.

After asking the question, he scanned his students with his eyes.

Selim Hoca:

“Children, who runs our school?” he asked.

The children lit up—this was an easy question. Answering it would make both them and their teacher happy.

Fingers shot into the air. Quite a few hands were raised.

To involve all the students, Selim Hoca said:

“Children, I’m asking the question to all of you. After I ask it, answer together”

Selim Hoca:

“Children, who runs our school?” he asked again.

All the students in the class answered in unison.

“The principal!”

Selim Hoca was pleased. Now it was time for the real question.

Selim Hoca:

“Children, you answered correctly. Now, what would happen if there were no principal?” he asked.

Fingers shot up again.

The students replied:

“The school wouldn’t function”

“The school would fall into chaos”

“The staff wouldn’t know what to do”

“Without a principal, the school might close”

“Who would give the ceremony speeches?”

Selim Hoca:

“Yes, children! Bees can’t survive without a queen. Just as people need someone to lead them. Of course, there has to be one. The principal ensures everything in the school runs smoothly” he said.

One of the students:

“Teacher! Thank goodness we have a principal!”

Selim Hoca:

“Yes. Now, here’s the question I really wanted to ask you. Who runs our body?” he asked.

The children:

“We do!” they answered.

Selim Hoca:

“Is that so?” he asked, feigning surprise.

A brief silence fell over the classroom as the children began to ponder the question.

A THREE-THOUSAND-YEAR-OLD BRAIN

For thousands of years, humans have been conducting research.

Among the countless things studied, one might be the brain.

For how many years, how many centuries,

How many millennia,

The sun has been studied,

The moon has been explored,

The Earth has been examined,

Yet every entity holds countless unsolved mysteries.

Selim Hoca wanted his students to read the book of nature.

In class, he introduced them to the brain.

He encouraged the children to think.

When the children went home, they shared what they'd learned with their parents.

The brain—

Regulating the heartbeat at the same time,

Controlling breathing at the same time,

Managing the digestive system at the same time,

Overseeing blood circulation.

Adjusting all these,

Never mixing them up—

A marvelous organ.

Doesn’t it make us wonder

About its Designer?

Selim Hoca’s sleep capsule was aboard the Butterfly One vehicle, heading toward the Red Planet.

The other name for the ASOR planet was the Red Planet.

Those who saw the planet from space understood why it bore that name.

SMELL

It came in a hurry. The automated robot approached Joe with a mix of haste and fear.

Automated robot:

“Mr. Joe!”

“Mr. Joe!”

Joe, with the mouse on his shoulder, had already caught a whiff of something. He didn’t know where this foul smell was coming from. Perhaps that’s why the robot had come.

After all, a bad smell would bother even a bad person.

“Yes, I’m listening” he said.

Automated robot:

“I have bad news for you” it said.

Joe:

“Bad news? What is it? Tell me quickly!”

Automated robot:

“Please don’t get mad at me for this news” it said.

Joe was already starting to get irritated.

The robot noticed Joe’s growing anger.

Automated robot:

“Your ship is on fire” it said.

Joe:

“Our ship is on fire?” he exclaimed in disbelief.

Joe quickly strode toward the section where the ship was.

The mouse leapt off Joe’s shoulder and scurried away on the ground.

When Joe reached the ship’s area, thick black smoke had engulfed the surroundings. The ventilation panels were working.

But why had the ship they’d used to reach the Ant spaceship caught fire?

HENRY’S DISCOVERY

Henry and the firefighter robots were working to extinguish the blaze.

Joe approached Henry.

“Henry!” he called out.

Henry:

“Oh! Joe, where have you been?” he asked.

Joe:

“I just found out about the fire. I came right away” he said.

Henry and Joe stared at the flames and smoke. Both their faces darkened. The robots’ metallic sheen had turned black from the soot.

Joe:

“Henry! Where did this fire come from?” he asked.

Henry:

“I don’t know, Joe! Once the ship cools down a bit, I think we’ll figure it out when we look inside” he said.

Meanwhile, the wind panels on the ceiling of the ship’s area were running at full power. The ventilation units sucked in the black smoke from the environment. A plastic fire could poison people.

At the bottom of the ship, drains carried away the burnt debris mixed with water. Black water trickled through the grates.

Henry and Joe stood silently, gazing at their charred ship. Both were deeply saddened. After all, the spaceship they’d arrived in belonged to someone else. Still, they mourned its loss.

Cold air was being sprayed from the ship’s sides to cool it down.

Henry and Joe looked exhausted, their shoulders slumped, their eyes weary. They had taken possession of the Ant spaceship, but they had partially lost their old one.

After a while.

Henry and Joe boarded the burnt ship from the landing platform.

Henry knew technical matters well. He searched inside the ship to determine the fire’s origin.

Henry’s eyes caught sight of red cables amidst the blackened wreckage.

He approached the cables carefully. Their protective coating appeared to have been gnawed.

But there were no mice on the ship other than Joe’s. Who could have done this gnawing?

Joe crouched on the floor, waiting for Henry’s explanation.

Henry stood up from beside the cables and walked over to Joe, holding a cable in his hand.

Henry:

“Joe!” he said, showing him the cable.

Joe looked at the cable and then at Henry, trying to make sense of it.

ARE YOU TO BLAME? OR AM I?

Henry pointed to the cables and said, “Pests”

Joe:

“Pests?” he asked.

Henry scraped a section of the cable with his other hand and continued:

“Insects chewed through the cable” he said.

Joe frowned slightly:

“Do insects chew cables?” he asked.

Henry:

“You’re right to question it” he said, hesitating whether to continue.

But since both were impatient, just as water won’t stay in a jug or words in a mouth, he went on.

Henry:

“Joe, those food scraps you spill around when you eat”

Joe:

“Do I spill food around?” he asked.

Henry, with tension flashing in his eyes:

“Yes, Joe! You spill food around” he said.

On top of the demoralization from the ship burning, Henry’s attitude further disheartened Joe.

He couldn’t find the energy to respond.

Henry:

“Joe! The food you spilled coated the cables. Look how the grease caught fire. Don’t you need to be more careful about cleanliness?” he said.

After being accused, Joe retorted to Henry:

“And what about you? Are you blameless? Is it right to eat standing up? Henry, because you eat standing, crumbs from your plate fall to the floor too.”

The automated robots listened to Henry and Joe, trying to make sense of the situation.

Joe:

“We’ve already suffered a loss. Let’s not increase our damage by arguing with each other. Isn’t it our shared interests that keep us together?” he asked.

Henry:

“Fine. How many losses is this now? We’re just spinning our wheels. We keep losing everything we gain” he said.

Both let out a frustrated “Ugh!” as they exhaled.

Henry:

“I’m going to my room. I need to think” he said.

Joe:

“Suit yourself” he replied.

He was fed up with the situation. Was his partnership with Henry coming to an end?

As Henry left the fire scene, there was something neither of them noticed.

The burnt ship carried a harmful bacterium, which they had brought onto the Ant spaceship.

GÖKHAN’S MEMORIES

The three friends were in deep sleep, yet their brains, hearts, and other organs continued to function.

Even when the brain slept, it was designed to regulate heartbeats and breathing.

Gökhan recalled his high school years. At home, he'd spread out a world atlas on the carpet.

There they were—the three great oceans…

The Atlantic Ocean, the Pacific Ocean, and the Indian Ocean…

When he was a child going to school, his elementary teacher had given them a Social Studies exam.

One of the written questions in the Social Studies class was: "How many oceans are there on Earth?"

Experts might say there's an ocean around Antarctica that should be considered separately, but the general consensus was that there were three oceans on Earth.

Gökhan's Social Studies exam had begun. The teacher sat at the desk, occasionally scanning the students with her eyes and glancing at the papers on her desk from time to time.

The students in the class were thinking, writing on their papers, and trying to recall the answers.

Meanwhile, the leaves of the plane tree outside the window rustled. The leaves glimmered in the sunlight. The wind rustling the plane tree’s leaves sometimes slipped into the classroom through the window.

As the children read the questions and thought about the answers, the chirping of birds among the plane tree’s branches soothed the students.

Gökhan wrote down the questions his teacher had written on the board onto his exam paper. He was thinking about the question:

“How many oceans are there on Earth?”

Gökhan wrote the answer on his exam paper.

Question:

How many oceans are there on Earth?

Answer:

• Pacific Ocean

• Indian Ocean

• Atlantic Ocean

• Pacific Ocean

Gökhan wrote, “There are four oceans on Earth.” Beneath this sentence, he listed the names of the oceans.

Gökhan was delighted to have answered the question. He thought he had gotten it right.

His classmates were still working on their answers.

The teacher looked at the children and said:

“Yes, children! Your time is running out. Hurry up a little.”

Shortly after.

Time was up.

The children began bringing their exam papers to the teacher.

The teacher checked the papers, looking to see if the students had written their names.

Most of the children had written their names correctly. The teacher called over one or two students who had forgotten to write their school numbers, asking them to add them.

Once the children wrote their numbers, the teacher arranged the papers in order by school number with her hands.

Teacher:

“Children, if you quietly read your books, I’ll grade your exams right now” she said.

Children:

“Okay, Teacher!” they replied.

Teacher:

“Do you promise to behave quietly?” she asked the whole class.

Students:

“Yes!” they shouted.

The teacher began grading the papers.

Elementary school teachers usually graded exams quickly. This was partly because the students’ answers were short and partly because some teachers designed exams requiring only brief responses.

When it was Gökhan’s turn, the teacher paused.

She looked at his paper with a hint of surprise. Gökhan’s answer had caught her off guard.

The teacher shifted her gaze from the paper to Gökhan, slightly furrowing her brows.

Teacher:

“Gökhan! Come here” she said.

Gökhan looked at the teacher, closed the book he was reading, and said.

“Yes, Teacher!”

He got up from his desk and walked to the teacher’s desk.

Teacher:

“Gökhan!” she said.

Holding Gökhan’s exam paper in her hand, she showed it to him.

The teacher tried to remain calm as she continued speaking.

Teacher:

“Gökhan, my student! Look, the question asked, ‘How many oceans are there on Earth?’ You wrote, ‘There are four oceans on Earth’” she said.

Gökhan:

“Yes, Teacher.”

Noticing the teacher’s initial frustration turn to calm, Gökhan continued.

Gökhan:

“There are four oceans on Earth” she said.

Teacher:

“Okay, tell me their names” she said.

Gökhan:

“Pacific Ocean, Indian Ocean, Atlantic Ocean, Pacific Ocean”

The teacher realized the child had made a mistake. She approached him with a little more affection to correct his error.

Teacher:

“My student! You’re saying the Pacific Ocean twice” she said.

Gökhan was surprised—did his teacher not know there were two Pacific Oceans?

Gökhan:

“Teacher! There are two Pacific Oceans” he said.

Teacher:

“Where did you learn that there are two Pacific Oceans?” she asked.

Gökhan:

“Teacher! From the atlas. In the world map in the atlas, there are two Pacific Oceans” he said.

Teacher:

“Could you bring the atlas? Let’s take a look!” she said.

Gökhan headed to his desk. When he reached it, he opened his bag.

The teacher watched as Gökhan took the atlas out of his bag and brought it to her.

Gökhan placed the atlas next to the teacher’s desk.

The teacher opened the world map in the atlas.

As soon as the world map was opened, Gökhan eagerly pointed with his hand to the Pacific Ocean written on both sides of the continents.

Gökhan, excitedly:

“Teacher! Look! Look! There are two Pacific Oceans” he said.

Gökhan was thrilled because he saw two Pacific Oceans in the atlas and felt he was telling the truth.

Teacher:

“Gökhan, my student! There’s only one Pacific Ocean” she said.

Gökhan:

“Teacher, there are two” he insisted.

Teacher:

“The two you see are one single ocean” she said.

Gökhan:

“How can that be?” he asked.

Teacher:

“Let’s look at a globe together sometime” she said.

Gökhan hadn’t understood the concept on the world map; later, on a globe, he better grasped that there was only one Pacific Ocean.

Now, far, far above the Pacific Ocean, he was traveling in a sleep cabin toward the ASOR planet.

The Red Planet was a desolate wasteland. What had happened to this land, once filled with green steppes where horses roamed, and streams and rivers flowed?

RED PLANET

The Red Planet appeared red from space due to its crimson dust clouds.

Deserts covered vast areas of the planet. The careless use of water resources and water waste had led to their depletion. With insufficient water, plants couldn’t grow, and oxygen release into the atmosphere diminished.

The saying “Water is the means of life’s continuation” held true.

As water sources dwindled, the ecological balance collapsed, and pastures for grazing animals shrank, causing many people to abandon this land.

First, winds began blowing from the north. These northern winds were dry and hot. The warm winds caused the grass to dry out and the surface water to evaporate.

Over time, the planet’s color changed, turning red. This reddish hue earned it the name “Red Planet”

A deep silence reigned over the cracked soil and darkened skies—until an object descended from among the twinkling stars toward the Red Planet. This object was the vehicle carrying the sleep modules of the

three friends who had departed from the Ant spaceship.

The three friends were asleep. Would they land safely on the surface of the Red Planet?

NOVEL

The vehicle carrying the three friends was approaching the Red Planet’s atmosphere. In his sleep capsule, Selim Hoca recalled a conversation with his imagination.

Selim Hoca was sitting at a table, writing a title in the notebook before him: Novel.

Selim Hoca’s imagination:

“How do you figure it could become a novel?” it asked.

Selim Hoca:

“Sometimes words shape our lives. Say ‘It can’t happen,’ and maybe it will” he said.

They paused for a moment.

Selim Hoca’s imagination continued the conversation.

Selim Hoca’s imagination:

“Who will you write this novel with?” it asked.

Selim Hoca:

“With you”

Selim Hoca’s imagination:

“With me?” it asked.

Selim Hoca:

“Yes, with you” he said.

Selim Hoca’s imagination:

“I’m just your imagination” it said.

Selim Hoca:

“In today’s world, imagination and reality are intertwined. Once, flying was a dream. A journey to the moon—now it’s real.”

Imagination:

“What will you write about in the novel?” it asked.

Selim Hoca:

“I’m thinking of writing about you” he said.

Selim Hoca’s imagination:

“There’s nothing remarkable or strange about me worth noting. Novels, you know, are

usually built on curiosity. The feeling of wonder in the reader as they turn the pages —‘What happens next? What happened after that?’—those questions.” it said.

Selim Hoca:

“You’re right. What if we wrote a useful novel together? What do you think?” he asked.

Selim Hoca’s imagination:

“Wouldn’t it be better to tell the truth then?” it asked.

Selim Hoca:

“Look! You’re right again. Do you have any suggestions?” he asked.

Selim Hoca’s imagination:

“You know, humanity needs peace and love more than ever” it said.

Selim Hoca paused for a moment.

For some, the struggle was for a slice of bread; for others, a sip of clean water. Throughout history, countless epidemics had struck—plague, cholera, leprosy—killing

thousands. How desperately humanity needed healthy nutrition, clean food, and a strong immune system.

It had never occurred to Selim Hoca before: writing about a doctor’s life.

Selim Hoca:

“Do you know what?” he asked.

Selim Hoca’s imagination:

“What?” it replied.

Selim Hoca:

“I’ve just had an idea” he said.

Selim Hoca’s imagination:

“What kind of idea?” it asked.

Selim Hoca:

“Writing about the lives of healthcare workers” he said.

Selim Hoca’s imagination:

“But do you know any healthcare workers personally?” it asked.

Selim Hoca:

“Yes” he said.

Selim Hoca’s imagination:

“Who?” it asked.

Selim Hoca:

“My mother, my father” he answered.

Selim Hoca’s imagination:

“Selim Hoca, is your family in healthcare?” it asked.

Selim Hoca:

“Yes, they’re healthcare workers” he said.

Selim Hoca’s imagination:

“Well, that’s great—turn your family’s life into a novel then” it said.

Selim Hoca fell into thought. How could he turn his family’s life into a novel? He began pondering this question.

Selim Hoca’s imagination:

“Actually, education and health are among the most important circles of human life,” it said, continuing, “What affected you at the place where your family worked?”

Selim Hoca recalled an incident at the emergency room entrance. Near their home, a dam was under construction, employing many workers. One day, Selim and his friend had gone to the hospital’s emergency entrance.

A vehicle, kicking up dust and smoke, sped into the street where the emergency room was located. It came to a sudden stop at the entrance. A man stepped out of the vehicle—his finger had been severed. They had brought the severed finger along with the worker to have it reattached.

Selim Hoca’s imagination:

“Oh no! A severed finger. Oh! May God spare anyone from such a thing” it said.

Selim Hoca:

“I remember that moment. I think they managed to reattach the finger”

Selim Hoca’s imagination:

“Workers need to be well-trained and educated about workplace safety” it said.

Selim Hoca:

“You know what? You’ve touched on a very important detail” he said.

Selim Hoca’s imagination:

“What detail?” it asked.

Selim Hoca:

“Health and education are intertwined—like the intersection of two sets in mathematics, where two circles share common elements” he said.

Selim Hoca’s imagination:

“I don’t understand. How so?” it asked.

Selim Hoca:

“Here’s how: if we educate workers about workplace safety and such, we’d face fewer health issues” he said.

Selim Hoca’s imagination:

“Yes, you’re right. We’ve drawn this lesson from your memory. Is there anything else that affected you?” it asked.

Selim Hoca:

“If I think a bit more, I could recount many memories related to the hospital. But do you think sharing these would be useful?” he asked.

Selim Hoca’s imagination:

“Of course it would! Advice is a treasure—to those who value it” it said.

They fell silent for a while.

Selim Hoca, lost in thoughts of the novel, drifted back to sleep.

The vehicle carrying the sleep modules had entered the Red Planet’s atmosphere. Would it land safely on the surface?

The vehicle’s automated systems sprang into action.

A voice came from inside:

“Thirty minutes until landing preparations”

The computers were analyzing signals to determine suitable landing spots on the planet’s surface.

The devices were scanning the planet’s terrain.

TREMOR

The ship was in the Red Planet’s atmosphere. Spacecraft typically experienced tremors upon entering an atmosphere, partly due to the planet’s gravitational pull.

The vehicle carrying the three friends had begun to shake. The ship’s warning lights were flashing. Inside, the lights flickered on and off.

Captain Can’s eyelids were closed, but beneath them, his pupils darted rapidly from side to side. This was caused by a power outage in the sleep modules.

Captain Can struggled to open his eyes. They weren’t supposed to wake up for another fifteen days. From inside his sleep capsule, he looked out through the vehicle’s window. Seeing reddish-yellow hues outside, he realized the ship was moving at an alarming speed.

Can:

“My God! What’s happening?” he said.

Can tried to open the lid of his sleep capsule.

No matter how hard he tried, he couldn’t get it open.

He began calling out.

Can:

“Selim! Gökhan! Wake up!” he shouted.

It was no use—Gökhan and Selim were still asleep.

The warning lights inside continued to blink.

A voice from the announcement system declared, “Twenty minutes until impact”

The ship had canceled its landing system. The vehicle might crash into the planet’s surface. The tremors persisted. The ship was heating up on one side while shaking on the other.

Can didn’t know what to do. The tremors made him feel faint. His head struck the right side of the capsule.

Suddenly, he heard a voice.

“Captain! Captain! Wake up!”

Captain Can faintly opened his eyes and vaguely saw Gökhan.

Gökhan had opened the lid of his sleep capsule. Selim was up too.

The announcement repeated:

“Fifteen minutes until impact”

The shaking continued.

The shaking continued.

The ship’s tremors had awakened the three friends. But what truly shook them was this: Where was the Ant spaceship? How had this happened to them? Would they find answers to these questions?

COLLECTION OF BEAUTIFUL WORDS

The vehicle carrying the three friends was hurtling toward the planet’s surface. Just minutes away from reaching it.

Captain Can said to his friends.

“No panic”

In the midst of such chaos and commotion, Can was calming his friends.

Captain Can:

“No panic” he kept saying.

Captain Can had once befriended someone who collected beautiful words.

It was years and years ago.

Can’s friend usually spoke his words once, never repeating them to the point of tiring those around him.

This friend of Captain Can had a companion who was a shepherd. The shepherd would walk with Can’s friend and share wise, insightful words with him.

Shepherd:

“The words that come out of our mouths shape our lives” he had said.

Over time, Can noticed that his friend collected beautiful words like a collector.

Can’s friend planted these beautiful words in people’s hearts like rose saplings.

A new warning sounded from the ship’s announcement system:

“Ten minutes until impact”

The ship trembled, and flames erupted from its outer surface.

Captain Can:

“Friends! The vehicle might break apart. We need to abandon it. Everyone, get into your sleep capsules. We’ll eject from inside them” he said.

Gökhan and Selim re-entered their sleep capsules, taking parachutes with them.

Once his friends had closed their lids, Captain Can opened the ship’s outer hatches. The sleep capsules activated their thrusters and detached from the ship.

As the capsules separated, they sped toward the planet’s surface. At that moment, the ship disintegrated in the air with a massive explosion.

As the ship broke apart, its fragments began falling from the sky to the ground. Pieces dropped past the sleep capsules.

Captain Can looked up through the window of his capsule. A few scattered fragments were visible. He opened the capsule’s window and let himself out.

Gökhan and Selim had also exited their capsules.

The three friends were parachuting down to the Red Planet’s surface.

That surface was muddy.

LANDING IN THE MUD

The three friends landed on the muddy ground. They let out a deep sigh of relief.

Captain Can:

“Friends! How are you?” he asked.

Gökhan:

“I’m okay” he said.

Selim:

“Thank God, I’m fine” he said.

Captain Can:

“Friends! We must have had some divine favor. We survived a major accident with only minor scrapes” he said.

Selim:

“What happened to us?” he asked.

Gökhan:

“What really happened to the ship? How did we get separated from the Ant spaceship?” he asked.

Captain Can:

“Friends! We have a lot of questions in our heads. Hopefully, we’ll find the answers in time. Right now, our top priority is protecting our health” he said.

Selim:

“Captain Can! You’re right. Let’s try to get out of this mud and find a dry place to rest” he said.

Gökhan:

“If we can reach that hill, I hope we’ll find a dry spot” he said.

The three friends set off together toward the hill.

MUD

The ground the three friends walked on was muddy. How had this mud formed on a planet with a water shortage?

Gökhan:

“The mud on the ground makes walking difficult” he said.

Selim:

“I think this mud isn’t just a mix of soil and water—it seems more like soil mixed with something like oil” he said.

Captain Can:

“It doesn’t quite resemble oil” he said.

Gökhan:

“Walking is tough!” he said.

Selim:

“You’re right” he agreed.

Gökhan:

“What happened to the Ant spaceship?” he asked.

Captain Can:

“Questions will be answered in time” he said.

Gökhan:

“Why did this happen to us?” he asked.

Captain Can:

“There’s a saying in Anatolia: ‘Water sleeps, but the enemy doesn’t’” he said.

Gökhan:

“Even water is sleeping” he said.

Selim:

“Exactly! No matter how careful we are, my father used to say, ‘Son, even if you’re a thirty-year veteran driver and cautious, traffic

is unpredictable… A car can still hit you. An accident happens in an instant’”

Captain Can:

“The quirks of space travel: a pilot hands the plane to the co-pilot, or if that’s not an option, to the autopilot. Machines can fail” he said.

Gökhan:

“Sometimes phones freeze, computers crash. Even we humans make mistakes” he said.

Selim:

“Exactly! Yet a person still feels guilty. They entrusted us with that huge ship” he said.

The three friends’ legs were covered in mud up to their knees. They stumbled through the mire.

Captain Can:

“Our situation is just like walking through this mud. We’ve fallen into the muck, but it’s good that we’re trying to get out. That’s life. Sometimes the ground splits open, and you fall in. May God protect us all from disasters and troubles” he said.

Selim:

“And we fell from the sky right into this mud. Imagine how nice our place was—comfortable seats… We went from gazing at the mysterious beauty of space through the windows to this. Our eyes, once watching the stars, are now fixed on the ground to avoid sinking into the mud” he said.

Captain Can:

“We’ve learned a lesson from this. Thank God, we’re drawing lessons from what we’ve been through. Friends! I want to tell you this: even though our feet are in the mud, we keep walking. Don’t let your thoughts get stuck in the mud either. Keep your hope alive—especially now, when we need it most” he said.

Selim:

“Captain Can! You’re right. We need to keep our hope alive these days” he said.

Captain Can:

“Let’s look at the positive side. Thank God I’m with friends like you” he said.

Gökhan:

“You’re right about that” he said.

The Butterfly One spacecraft had disintegrated. Its pieces were scattered in all directions.

How would the three friends return to the Ant spaceship? Could they escape this planet?

Questions, questions.

Their movement brought them closer to the answers.

A journey of a thousand kilometers begins with a single step.

The three friends, knee-deep in mud and exhausted, pressed on toward the hill ahead. They hoped that reaching the hill would at least lessen their fatigue and bring them closer to salvation.

Gökhan:

“What’s the name of this planet?” he asked.

Selim:

“I don’t know. Maybe we’ll meet someone living here” he said.

Captain Can:

“Once we get to the top of that hill, we’ll look around. Maybe we’ll find a settlement” he said.

Gökhan:

“When we reach the hill, should we split up to search for help?” he asked.

Captain Can:

“I think this is unfamiliar territory. We should stick together” he said.

Selim:

“Captain Can! You’re right. This place is desolate… Our elders always say, ‘The one who strays from the herd gets taken by the wolf’” he said.

Gökhan:

“Are living things stronger when they’re together?” he asked.

Selim:

“Yes. Many animals in Africa live in herds—antelopes, zebras…”

Gökhan:

“Birds too” he added.

Selim:

“When birds fly together, I think it’s like this: a single bird flies with one pair of eyes, but in flocks like starlings, thousands of eyes fly together” he said.

Gökhan:

“What one bird doesn’t see, another can. What it sees might be a lake, prey, or a pasture” he said.

Captain Can:

“Speaking of birds… Do you know where the name Kazlı Çeşme in Istanbul comes from?” he asked.

Selim:

“I do. During the conquest, soldiers followed geese flying overhead while searching for water and found a spring. That’s why it’s called Kazlı Çeşme” he said.

Gökhan:

“We’re getting close to the hill” he said.

Captain Can:

“Friends! I hear a sound. Do you hear it too?” he asked.

As the three friends approached the hill, they heard a sound. The closer they got, the louder it became.

SOUND

Gökhan:

“Friends! I don’t have the strength to keep walking” he said.

Selim:

“Don’t give up so soon. We’re tired too. When a person falls into a pit or a well, the energy they use at first is crucial” he said.

Captain Can:

“Yes” he agreed.

Gökhan:

“Most of it’s behind us, just a little left. A bit more patience” he said.

The mud was everywhere. The surface was coated with a blackish substance. At times, they were knee-deep in it, nearing the end, but exhaustion had set in.

Captain Can:

“Friends! The sound seems to be coming from that cave, doesn’t it?” he asked.

Selim:

“Yes, it sounds like it’s coming from inside that cave to me too. Is it the sound of water?” he asked.

Captain Can:

“Yes, it sounds like water” he said.

Hearing the sound of water lifted the three friends’ spirits. Despite their fatigue, they pressed on with renewed effort toward the hill.

At the base of the hill, the mud was thicker.

Captain Can:

“Friends! Stop!” he said.

Gökhan and Selim halted.

Captain Can:

“Let’s be cautious. It might be a swamp. I’ll go ahead. You wait here” he said.

Captain Can began walking carefully. As he suspected, his foot didn’t touch solid ground. It was a deep spot.

He turned back and looked at his friends.

Captain Can:

“Friends! It’s deep here, don’t come this way” he said.

Captain Can veered to the right, where there were rocks.

Selim:

“Captain, the ground with the rocks seems safer” he said.

Captain:

“You’re right. If you want, come this way. Let’s go over the rocks together” he said.

The three friends finally reached the hilltop via the rocks. They all lay on their backs atop the hill.

Gökhan:

“It feels like the world exists again” he said.

Captain Can:

“Look, we’ve walked quite a distance” he said.

Selim:

“A road—and what a road it was” he said.

Just above where the three friends lay, there were rocks of various sizes, and behind them, a cave. Many caves, large and small, dotted the hilltop.

The three friends wanted to rest and then head toward the cave where the sound of water was coming from. Their clothes were greasy, their bodies sweaty, and they were thirsty.

Meanwhile, the sound from the cave grew louder.

CAVE

The three friends had rested. Though Captain Can didn’t express his emotions, he was deeply saddened by what they had been through. Of course, he had every right to be upset, but he needed to find a way—any way—to return to the Ant spaceship. For that, Captain Can needed good morale.

Selim:

“Friends! If we’ve rested, shall we check out the cave? Maybe we’ll find water” he said.

Gökhan:

“Sure” he replied.

Captain Can:

“Alright then! Let’s get moving” he said.

All three stood up and started walking toward the cave.

Selim:

“Caves are usually cool” he said.

The sound coming from the cave was soothing them. The three friends reached the entrance of the cave.

PEN ROBOT

With the systems of the Ant spaceship altered, the pen robot, kept in an isolated room, sprang into action.

The pen robot had a small assistant—a pen with a propeller on top. Since it worked alongside this propeller pen, it was called the pen robot.

Propeller:

“Pen robot, the ship’s systems have changed” it said.

Pen robot:

“Really? How?” it asked.

Propeller:

“We’re tasked with investigating this. Let’s head to the botanical garden first” it said.

Pen robot:

“Okay” it replied.

They tried to leave the room together, but there were automated robots around.

Propeller: “Wait, let me check” it said.

The propeller flew along the corridor, surveying the area.

Propeller:

“All clear, you can come” it said.

Pen robot:

“They might notice us” it said.

Propeller:

“We need to move quickly” it replied.

Pen robot:

“Is the botanical garden far?” it asked.

Propeller:

“Three hundred meters ahead” it said.

Pen robot:

“What will we do in the botanical garden?” it asked.

Propeller:

“There’s a room there connected to many of the ship’s systems. It has a map of the ship. We’ll figure out what’s going on” it explained.

They walked for a while.

Propeller: “Wait a minute, three automated robots are coming this way” it said.

Pen robot: “What do we do?” it asked.

Propeller: “Let’s go through the door on the right” it said.

They entered the door on the right together. After a short while, when things quieted down, they stepped back out.

Pen robot:

“How much farther?” it asked.

Propeller:

“Fifty meters. At the end of this corridor, turn right, and the botanical garden will be right in front of us” it said.

Pen robot:

“Is anything following us?” it asked.

Propeller:

“Just a cleaner—a robot cleaning the corridor” it replied.

The cleaner was tidying the corridor.

The pen robot and propeller reached the botanical garden, but they needed to open the door. How would they do that?

They stopped in front of it.

CLEANER

The cleaner arrived at the entrance to the botanical garden. The pen robot and propeller were beside the door. The cleaner stopped in

front of the garden’s entrance, and the door opened.

Pen robot:

“Oh! Thank goodness” it said.

Propeller:

“Pen robot, let’s slip in behind the cleaner” it said.

All three robots were now inside the botanical garden.

BOTANICAL GARDEN

The botanical garden was a space created by bringing in various plant species from Earth. It even had a waterfall inside.

Pen robot:

“This place is beautiful” it said.

Propeller:

“The spot we’re heading to is under a date palm tree. Can you see a date palm around?” it asked.

Pen robot:

“Isn’t that tree behind the palms a date palm?” it asked.

Propeller:

“Yes. Let’s go! Hurry!” it said.

In the botanical garden, there were robots tending to the plants—some watering and fertilizing flowers, others pruning.

The botanical garden served both as an oxygen supply for the ship and a resting place for the crew.

The propeller and pen robot reached the date palm. In front of it was a well.

Propeller:

“Pen robot, there’s a door at the bottom of this well” it said.

Pen robot:

“Yes. What do we do next?” it asked.

Propeller:

“That door leads to the room I mentioned” it said.

Pen robot:

“Are we going down the well now?” it asked.

Propeller:

“Yes” it replied.

Unbeknownst to the pen robot and propeller, a pair of black eyes was watching them from among the grass. It was Marul Joe’s mouse.

The mouse had realized that the pen robot and propeller were different from the other robots. It scurried away through the garden’s pipes.

The mouse wanted to find Joe quickly and tell him about the pen robot and propeller.

Pen robot:

“There’s a rope ladder inside the well” it said.

Propeller:

“Climb down the rope ladder. I’ll fly down myself” it said.

Shortly after.

The propeller and pen robot were at the bottom of the well. They were curious about what they’d encounter once they opened the door.

The mouse had reached Joe quickly and told him what was happening.

Joe ordered the magnet robots to capture the propeller and pen robot.

The magnet robots headed toward the botanical garden.

Marul Joe wanted the propeller and pen robot caught. He had forgotten about the pen robot after their vehicle burned.

Marul Joe:

“Magnets! Hurry up!” he commanded.

Marul Joe himself was also rushing toward the botanical garden with quick steps. Meanwhile, oblivious to these developments, our heroes were heading toward the bottom of the well.

Propeller:

“Pen robot, I think I heard something. I’ll go up and check. You keep going down” it said.

The propeller flew up to the top of the well and saw the magnet robots approaching them.

In a panic, the propeller shouted, “Pen robot!”

Propeller:

“Hurry! The magnet robots are after us!” it said.

Hearing this, the pen robot let its feet dangle and gripped the rope with its hands, sliding down quickly.

The magnet robots reached the top of the well. They immediately activated their magnetic fields.

The robots in the botanical garden were caught in their pull. Those tending the garden

clung to tree trunks and branches to avoid being dragged away.

Propeller:

“Pen robot! I’m getting caught in the magnets’ pull!” it called out.

The pen robot was holding the door handle with one hand and the propeller with the other. It quickly opened the door and slipped inside, shutting it behind them.

Propeller:

“There’s a button here. It fills the well’s entrance with water” it said.

The pen robot pressed the button. The well’s opening began to fill with water.

Pen robot to propeller:

“We need to hurry. What do we do?” it asked.

Propeller:

“The numbers in the cube. We need to find the cube” it said.

It began searching for the cube.

What were the numbers in the cube?

What was the cube for?

Could they escape the magnet robots?

These were questions the pen robot didn’t know the answers to.

Pen robot:

“So?” he asked.

An announcement came over the ship’s intercom:

“A vehicle is departing from the ship. Risk of bacterial contamination. Please! Do not leave the ship”

Despite this warning, Joe and Henry, who was infected with bacteria, left the ship.

The Pen Robot looked at the screen.

Pen Robot:

“Propeller! Isn’t this ship Joe and his crew’s ship?” he asked.

Propeller:

“Yes, it’s their ship. I hope they don’t spread the bacteria to Earth” he said.

Pen Robot and Propeller watched the vehicle depart. Propeller:

“So, there’s no one left on the ship, huh?” he said.

Pen Robot:

“Yes, but we need to find the Butterfly One spacecraft” he replied.

Propeller:

“When and where was the last signal from Butterfly One received?” he asked.

Pen Robot:

“It came when it was in front of the Red Planet” he said.

Propeller:

“Let’s send a message to Butterfly 1 from here and wait” he suggested.

Pen Robot sent the message, but there was no response. The Butterfly One spacecraft had been destroyed.

Propeller:

“Pen Robot! It’d be risky for us to leave the ship. Should we send a search and rescue

ship to the Red Planet? What do you think?” he asked.

Pen Robot:

“Sounds good” he said.

They sent a search and rescue ship to the Red Planet from the ship’s control system. The search and rescue ship automatically detached from the Ant Spacecraft.

Propeller:

“Computer, you, or the three of us—let’s find a solution together. If there’s a disease, there’s a cure. Let’s ask the computer about protective health measures. What should we do to prevent the bacteria from spreading?” he asked.

The ship’s management computer gave a single answer: “Cleanliness”

Pen Robot:

“Then let’s activate all the cleaning robots on the ship. We should reduce the energy levels in the ship’s other units to a minimum” he said.

They accepted this proposal and began implementing it.

Soon after.

What would happen next?

PARK

Meanwhile, Propeller’s thoughts drifted back to years ago. He remembered what his inventor had told him.

The inventor had told Propeller about a park he visited in Ankara.

Inventor:

“Propeller, do you know?” he asked.

Propeller:

“Know what?” he replied.

Inventor:

“Years ago, I was in Ankara. I was young back then. I was sitting in a park called Güvenpark,” he said. The inventor paused here. Propeller realized the inventor wanted him to ask a question.

Propeller:

“Then what happened?” he asked.

Inventor:

“I thought about my life. There was always this feeling in me, like I needed to complete something” he said.

Propeller:

“What do you mean?” he asked.

Inventor:

“I have to finish school. I need to learn a language. I should exercise” he said.

Propeller:

“Did you feel forced to do things?” he asked.

Inventor:

“I have to do something. I need to complete things. We’re driven by our emotions. We feel like traveling, so we travel; we read; we feel like writing, so we write” he said.

Propeller:

“Aren’t those good things?” he asked.

Inventor:

“Being active, staying engaged—it’s wonderful, but why do I still feel an emptiness inside? I can’t answer that question” he said.

Propeller:

“Maybe you fill that emptiness with these activities” he suggested.

Inventor:

“Propeller, life is so short. They say in the final years of life, a person takes stock of themselves. If they’ve done good, useful things, built a happy family, they feel at

peace and pass away in tranquility. And then there’s the opposite” he said.

Propeller:

“Hmm!” he responded.

The inventor let out a sigh.

Propeller:

“You were telling me about being in the park —what happened next?” he asked.

Inventor:

“You’re right. The topic we were just discussing could branch off. There are some things I need to sort out within myself. You know what, Propeller? We humans are such mysterious beings that even in our own inner world, we’re unaware of so much. They say what we know isn’t even three-thousandths of what exists. Look, centuries have passed, and we still haven’t unraveled the mysteries of the sun, our brains, and so many other things” he said.

Propeller noticed the inventor was deep in thought.

Inventor:

“So, I was sitting in the park on a sunny day. Pigeons were eating crumbs off the ground. There were lots of people around, all heading somewhere. For a moment, I realized I was inside a magnificent painting” he said.

Propeller:

“A magnificent painting?” he asked.

Inventor:

“Of course, Propeller! Think about it—I was traveling from youth to adulthood. The people around me were on journeys within themselves and in the world they lived in. And the interesting part, do you know what it is?” he asked.

Propeller:

“No, I don’t even know what’s so interesting about it” he said.

Inventor:

“How all these vast events don’t get tangled up with each other” he said.

Propeller:

“What do you mean, not tangled up?” he asked.

Inventor:

“While we humans were in the park, clouds were drifting above us. How do they know where to go?” he asked.

Propeller:

“So, you’re saying there’s a designer, someone ensuring everything works in harmony?” he asked.

Inventor:

“Yes. And in that moment, I thought about something” he said.

Propeller:

“What?” he asked.

Inventor:

“Facing the universe’s order and precision, I thought we should live our lives with balance too” he said.

And so, Propeller had momentarily recalled what his inventor had told him.

Now, aboard the Ant Spacecraft, there was both a contagion and uncertainty.

When strangers came aboard, the balance was disrupted, and the ship’s operations were shaken. One of the most important things in the universe was balance. Balance, measure, order, and harmony ensured everything ticked along like clockwork. Would this balance be restored on the Ant Spacecraft? Time would tell.

THE INVENTOR’S STORY

The inventor had attended university in Ankara.

In Ankara, there were public buses. The ones the people rode… The buses were packed. Passengers stood. The seats were completely full.

From inside, the conductor’s voice could be heard:

“Move forward. Let’s move toward the back!”

The passengers moved along.

The inventor spoke with his imagination in his inner world.

Inventor’s Imagination:

“The weather’s cloudy, the bus is full. What’s going to come of this?” it asked.

Inventor:

“I’m thinking about death. When you’ve lived most of your life, you get closer to death, and you start to accept it as a reality” he said.

Imagination:

“Death is an inevitable truth. Period. Everyone born will die” it said.

Inventor:

“The other day, I saw a river flowing aimlessly” he said.

Imagination:

“Even if you see the river flowing aimlessly, it’s flowing full and strong. Who knows? Maybe its waters will nourish gardens and flowers” it said.

Inventor:

“Shall I tell you a story?” he asked.

Imagination:

“Tell me. I’d love to hear your story” it said.

The inventor began to tell it.

“There was a rooster that started crowing as the sun rose. One day, the rooster said,

‘I think the sun rises because I crow. No, no—maybe the sun comes here to hear my beautiful crowing’

Since the rooster had never seen beyond the farm, it thought it was the only rooster in the world.

The rooster started talking to the sun.

‘Hey, beautiful Sun! Do you come here to hear my lovely crowing?’ it asked.

The Sun replied,

‘Come on! There are thousands of roosters like you in the world’

The rooster was shocked.

‘Thousands of roosters like me in the world?’ it asked the Sun.

The Sun said,

‘If you want, go visit the nearby villages and see for yourself’

Following the Sun’s advice, the rooster visited the nearby villages and learned its place”

Imagination:

“That ended nicely” it said.

Inventor:

“Do you know something?” he asked.

Imagination:

“What?” it replied.

Inventor:

“Do you know my head hurts?” he asked.

Imagination:

“No” it answered.

A little later…

Inventor:

“I need some quiet time” he said.

Imagination:

“I’ll leave you alone” it said, and parted from the inventor.

WHAT’S HAPPENING ON THE SHIP

Pen Robot and Propeller put the plan into action.

Pen Robot:

“Propeller! The cleaning robots have started working. As of now, 30% of the corridors are cleaned” he said.

Propeller:

“The ship’s energy level is currently at 7%” he said.

Pen Robot:

“Propeller! Do you think we’ll succeed?” he asked.

Propeller:

“I’d like to answer that question by telling you about a book I read” he said.

ESCAPE FROM THE PIT

Pen Robot:

“You read a book?” he asked.

Propeller:

“Yes” he said.

Pen Robot:

“I’m curious. Tell me about it” he said.

Propeller:

“Two friends are driving when their car veers off a mountain road and rolls into a pit” he said.

Pen Robot:

“Do they survive the crash?” he asked.

Propeller:

“They survive, but they’re injured. In the book, two friends are traveling along a high mountain road by the seaside when their car goes off the road and tumbles into a deep pit. Emerging from the vehicle, the two friends realize their legs are broken.

Fuat:

‘Necati! Does your leg hurt?’ he asked.

Necati:

‘Yes, Fuat! I think my leg’s hurt like yours’ he said.

Fuat:

‘Let’s make bandages for ourselves with those branches over there’ he said.

Necati:

‘Okay’ he replied.

Fuat and Necati used torn pieces of their shirts and the branches to bandage their legs.

In the darkness of the night, the two friends heard a sound. Looking up, they saw a wolf growling at them under the starry sky.

It was a hungry wolf.

Necati:

‘Fuat! Quick, to the car!’ he said.

Fuat:

‘Hurry, hurry!’ he said.

Necati:

‘I think this wolf is hungry’ he said.

Fuat and Necati crawled quickly to the car, got inside, and closed the windows.

The wolf fearlessly jumped into the pit and came to the car’s side.

It bared its teeth and clawed at the glass.

Necati:

‘Strange! What do you think? Can we get out of this?’ he asked.

Fuat:

‘If we try, yes’ he said.

The hungry wolf circled the car like a propeller. It stared at Necati and Fuat through the windshield, showing its front teeth.

Wolf:

‘Grr!’ it growled.

Necati and Fuat looked at the wolf in terror. Fuat turned on the car’s headlights. The wolf’s eyes gleamed brightly.

The wolf tilted its head upward.

Wolf:

‘Awoo!’ it began to howl.

Other wolves started howling too.

Soon, a few more wolves appeared at the edge of the pit. They howled,

‘Ooo!’

Necati:

‘Fuat! What a terrifying night. Dark night, broken legs, wolves out for our lives’ he said.

Before Fuat could say anything.

Wolves:

‘Ooo!’ they howled.

Necati:

‘Okay, but how are we going to do this?’ he asked.

Fuat:

‘What if we make some noise?’ he asked.

Necati:

‘What can we do?’ he asked.

Fuat:

‘I’ll turn on the car stereo. Maybe they’ll run from the music’ he said.

Fuat turned on the stereo, and music started playing. The song said, ‘I came from far away.’

The wolf in the pit came back to the windshield.

Wolf:

‘Ooo!’ it howled.

Necati lit his lighter. The flame didn’t scare the wolf away—it was no use.

What would Necati and Fuat do?

The wolves at the top of the pit couldn’t come down.

Fuat:

‘Necati, there’s a compartment in the back seat that opens to the trunk. Let’s grab the blankets from the trunk and cover ourselves. Maybe that’ll help’ he said.

Necati:

‘Okay’ he replied.

Fuat and Necati took the blankets from the trunk and covered themselves.

Suddenly, a silence fell over the scene.”

THE ARRIVAL OF THE BEAR

The wolf was exhausted. Fuat and Necati could hear its rapid breathing. They realized the wolf had worn itself out from trying to attack. Suddenly, a different sound came from within the forest.

Fuat:

“What’s that noise?” he asked.

Necati:

“I can’t quite make it out” he said.

Bear:

“Grrr!” it began to roar.

Fuat:

“That’s a bear’s sound” he said.

The bear was at the edge of the pit. Standing on its hind legs, it roared as loud as it could.

Without hesitation, the bear threw itself into the pit.

Necati:

“This noise. I think the bear’s in the pit too” he said.

Fuat:

“Necati! You move to the trunk. I’ll stay here” he said.

Necati:

“How can we move? The compartment’s small—I won’t fit” he said.

Fuat:

“What if we lift the back seat?” he suggested.

Necati:

“Actually, it’d be better if we took the part of the seat we’re leaning on and put it over us” he said.

The two friends lifted the seat and placed it over themselves. The car’s roof had already collapsed significantly from the crash. The

bear came to the side of the car and tried to move it from the outside.

When the wolf saw the bear arrive, it retreated back to the bushes in the pit.

Necati:

“Patience! Patience! This will pass” he said.

Fuat:

“We didn’t do anything to these animals. Why are they so ferocious?” he asked.

Necati:

“Because of people who pollute the forest and harm the environment—that’s why the bear and the wolf are so aggressive” he said.

Fuat:

“Okay, but why did this happen to us?” he asked.

Necati:

“Who knows? If we get out of here alive, we’ll tell others about what we’ve been through.

We’ll explain the importance of protecting the forest and not harming the ecological environment” he said.

Fuat:

“The wolf, the bear—they’re all starving” he said.

Necati:

“The bear’s hungry too; it’ll tire out like the wolf soon” he said.

Indeed, the bear, like the wolf, grew exhausted. It went to the bushes in the pit and fell asleep from fatigue.

Fuat and Necati spent the whole night drifting between sleep and worry. At the first light of morning, the search and rescue team arrived at the edge of the pit.

Search and Rescue Team Leader:

“Is anyone in the vehicle?” he called out.

Fuat:

“Necati! Help has arrived!” he shouted.

Necati:

“Hey! We’re here! We’re in the car! Be careful —there’s a wolf and a bear in the pit!” he said.

Leader:

“A wolf? A bear?” he muttered to himself in astonishment. To his team, he said:

“Friends! We’re going to try to pull the vehicle out of here. There’s a wolf and a bear in the pit”

The tow truck’s ropes were lowered down. With great difficulty, Fuat and Necati tied the straps to the car’s roof.

Necati:

“All set! We’ve tied the straps!” he called out.

Leader:

“Hold on tight! We’re starting to pull you up!” he said.

The tow truck began pulling the vehicle with the straps attached. The bear and the wolf watched but didn’t attack.

Leader:

“Be careful, friends! The people inside the vehicle are injured!” he said.

The vehicle with Fuat and Necati inside reached the edge of the pit.

The rescue team pulled Fuat and Necati out of the car. Fuat exclaimed, “Oh! There’s a world out here!”

Necati:

“Is there any meat?” he asked.

Leader:

“There’s meat in the vehicle’s freezer” he said.

Necati:

“The wolf and bear are starving. Let’s throw them some meat, some food” he said.

Fuat:

“Necati, why are you doing this?” he asked.

Necati:

“We’re human. The wolf and the bear ended up like this because of those who misuse the environment and damage the forests. It’s everyone’s duty to make up for our mistakes” he said.

Fuat:

“You’re right” he said.

The search and rescue team threw food to the wolf and bear. They rescued them from the pit as well. The wolf and bear, grateful for the kindness and food from these humans, disappeared into the forest without causing trouble.

The search and rescue team took Fuat and Necati to the hospital for treatment.

Propeller:

“And that’s how it went! The book I read taught me to stay hopeful no matter the hardship” he said.

Pen Robot:

“From what you’ve told me, it feels like we might share some blame for Joe and Henry ending up in this situation” he said.

Propeller:

“What do you mean?” he asked.

Pen Robot:

“I don’t know them or their lives, but if they’d had a good education, maybe they wouldn’t have ended up like this” he said.

Propeller:

“I don’t know. Education and learning are always good. A person who knows right from wrong acts more rationally” he said.

Pen Robot:

“You need willpower to know what’s harmful or wrong and still act rightly” he said.

Propeller:

“You’re right” he said.

At that moment, an informative announcement came over the ship’s intercom:

“The bacteria level is dropping rapidly. Attention! The bacteria level is dropping rapidly”

Propeller:

“Pen Robot, the bacteria level is decreasing. What do we do now?” he asked.

Pen Robot:

“Once the bacteria level drops to its lowest, we’ll investigate whether Captain Can and the crew are still alive” he said.

The Butterfly One spacecraft, carrying Can and his friends, had exploded in the skies of the Red Planet, and there had been no news since.

The search and rescue ship “Raindrop” arrived at the surface of the Red Planet.

IN THE CAVE

Can and his friends reached the cave. It was dark inside, with green and blue stones scattered around.

Captain Can:

“Friends! Let’s be careful” he said.

Gökhan:

“The ground feels slippery” he said.

There were stalactites hanging from the ceiling and stalagmites rising from the floor, their colors tinged with yellow. Selim grabbed the stalagmites to climb down.

Selim:

“There’s a coolness in here, isn’t there?” he asked.

Captain Can:

“Yes, it’s pretty cool inside. Hey! Look over there!” he said.

Gökhan:

“I can’t believe my eyes. That’s the sound of water I’m hearing!” he said.

They were all thrilled about this. They went to the water and cleaned themselves.

Gökhan:

“This is a red planet, dried up from lack of water, but there’s water underground. Why do you think it’s like this?” he asked.

Captain Can:

“I think it’s a general rule. If you don’t value something, you lose it. If water is wasted or squandered, it disappears. The water on this planet has retreated underground. If you’re not careful pouring even a handful of water onto a flower, it slips through your fingers and is gone” he said.

Selim:

“You’re right” he said.

The three friends swam in the water. They drank handfuls of clean water. Encountering the water had brought them relief.

Water was both a means of cleansing and a source of refreshment.

Captain Can:

“Back in my university days, I went to a forest. There were beautiful trees as far as the eye could see and a flowing stream. I thought to myself there, protecting beauty is just as important as creating it” he said.

They lingered by the water for a while.

PAIN

Suddenly, Captain Can fell ill. He collapsed to the ground, groaning.

Captain Can:

“Ah!” he cried.

Selim and Gökhan rushed to his side.

Selim:

“Captain, what’s wrong?” he asked.

Captain Can:

“I don’t feel good. There’s a burning in my chest” he said.

Captain Can pressed his right hand to his chest, his face wracked with helplessness.

Captain Can:

“Ah!” he groaned.

Gökhan:

“What can we do?” he asked.

Captain Can:

“God! My stomach’s burning. I’m so regretful. This is all my fault. I couldn’t protect a single ship. How can I live with this shame?” he said.

Selim:

“Captain! We’re human. We all make mistakes” he said.

Captain Can:

“Ah! How did we make such a mistake?” he said.

Captain Can could no longer bear the pain of losing the ship. He writhed in agony.

Captain Can:

“Ah! I didn’t want you to see me like this” he said.

Gökhan looked at the captain, unable to say anything.

Captain Can:

“I can’t take it. My chest hurts. My stomach’s producing acid” he said.

He was like a patient on the brink of death.

Captain Can:

“Oh no! Ah! There’s a burning in my chest. Ah!” he cried.

Selim:

“Captain! Try to sleep. Maybe it’ll pass” he said.

Captain Can tried to sleep. It was no use. The pain and burning in his chest continued.

Captain Can:

“Ah! Ah! I couldn’t protect what was entrusted to me!” he said.

Selim:

“Captain! Calm down” he said.

Captain Can:

“Ah! A captain is one who saves his ship” he said.

Captain Can kept groaning.

LEAVE ME ALONE

The pain and agony had become unbearable. Captain Can fell asleep. Selim and Gökhan stepped away for a bit.

Selim:

“We all share some blame for ending up like this, but I don’t think it was a deliberate mistake” he said.

Gökhan:

“It’s like being hit by a car in traffic. There’s nothing you can do” he said.

A little later…

Captain Can woke up.

Captain Can:

“Friends! I feel awful. I’m cold” he said.

Selim:

“Let’s go outside the cave” he said.

Captain Can:

“Leave me alone” he said.

Gökhan:

“For God’s sake, Captain! How could we leave you alone? Please, don’t say such things” he said.

Captain Can:

“There’s still a little pain in my chest” he said.

Selim:

“Captain, what’s done is done. There’s no point in dwelling on the past and feeling sad or regretful anymore. Look! Being like this is harming your body,” he said.

Gökhan:

“Yes. You should think positive thoughts. Once we get off this planet, who knows? Maybe we’ll find the ship too” he said.

Together, they left the cave. It was night. The warm air had dried their clothes.

Meanwhile.

The Raindrop Search and Rescue vehicle had reached the wreckage of Butterfly 1. The debris consisted of thousands of pieces.

Raindrop Rescue Vehicle:

“Ant Spacecraft! We’re reporting the situation. Butterfly 1 exploded in the air. There are no signs of life at the wreckage site” it said.

Ant Spacecraft:

“Keep searching around the wreckage” it replied.

Raindrop:

“Understood” it said.

Gökhan was standing in front of the cave.

Gökhan:

“Hey, what’s that thing that looks like a star?” he said.

Selim:

“What star? Where?” he asked.

Gökhan:

“Right there! Look!” he said.

When Selim looked in that direction.

Selim:

“A spacecraft!” he said.

What Gökhan had seen was the Raindrop Rescue vehicle.

Captain Can:

“Who knows? Maybe this vehicle has come to rescue us” he said.

ON THE SHIP

Pen Robot:

“Most of the bacteria have been cleaned up” he said.

Propeller:

“Let’s ventilate the entire ship” he said.

Pen Robot:

“Sure. Ventilating the ship would be a protective health measure” he said.

The ship’s ventilation windows were opened. The ship was thoroughly aired out. No bacteria remained on board.

Propeller:

“Oh! Thank goodness. The ship is clean” he said.

Pen Robot:

“Now we need to use the numbers in the cube to restore the auto-robots to their original state” he said.

They brought the cube to the ship’s command center. Using the numbers that appeared on the cube, they reloaded the robots’ original systems. Thus, the Ant Spacecraft returned to its initial state.

Now it was time to find Captain Can and his friends.

Pen Robot:

“Something inside me says Captain Can and his friends are still alive” he said.

Propeller:

“I hope so too” he said.

The ship continued its journey through space.

NEGATIVE THINGS

Captain Can had recovered somewhat.

Captain Can:

“Friends! Forgive me. Negative events and thoughts affect me deeply. My stomach produced acid. Thank God I’ve gotten through it. I feel better now” he said.

Selim:

“Thank goodness, Captain. We were worried for a moment. If you’re okay, we’re okay too. We’re a team” he said.

Gökhan:

“For a moment, I thought about death” he said.

Selim:

“When has death ever left our minds? Everything new grows old, everyone born dies. This illness reminded us of death again. It made us realize once more that we need to prepare for the life after death” he said.

Can:

“There’s a door awaiting all of us—the grave, where we’ll be held accountable” he said.

Gökhan:

“I hope we can do beneficial things” he said.

The search and rescue vehicle Raindrop was scouring the area around the wreckage. At that moment, it detected the footprints of our heroes.

Raindrop:

“Ant Spacecraft! Ant Spacecraft! We’ve detected footprints on the ground” it messaged.

Ant Spacecraft:

“Follow the tracks. Keep us updated on any developments” it replied.

This news brought joy to the Ant Spacecraft.

A little later.

Raindrop located the three friends.

Can stood up, turned toward the spacecraft, and shouted, “Hey! We’re here!”

Raindrop landed beside the three friends. The auto-robots that disembarked from the ship approached Captain Can, Selim, and Gökhan. The three friends were finally rescued. They boarded the vehicle and headed toward the Ant Spacecraft.

C 20 SHIP

The adventure wasn’t over. It continued. The Ant Spacecraft floated in space, amidst planets and stars, within the ether.

That night, Captain Can fell ill again. His stomach produced acid. There was a burning sensation in the lower part of his lungs. Captain Can was in pain.

Meanwhile, another ship was traveling through space. This was the C 20 passenger ship.

As the Raindrop vehicle was nearing the Ant Spacecraft, it encountered the C 20 passenger ship.

The captain of the C 20 passenger ship was Erol.

Captain Erol:

“Unidentified vehicle! Please identify yourselves!” he said.

Captain Can:

“This is the Raindrop Search and Rescue Vehicle,” he said.

Captain Erol:

“We’re the C 20 passenger ship. Do you need any assistance?” he asked.

Can:

“Yes. I’ve fallen ill. Do you have a doctor?” he asked.

Captain Erol:

“Yes, we have a doctor on board. We’re sending them to you” he said.

The doctor arrived at Captain Can’s ship in a vehicle and examined him.

Doctor:

“Is there pain?” he asked.

Captain Can:

“There’s a burning under my lungs” he said.

The doctor examined Captain Can, asking questions like, “Is the pain here?” “Does the burning occur here?”

Captain Can answered the questions.

Doctor:

“I’ll give you a pill for your stomach. Let’s check again in half an hour” he said.

Captain Can couldn’t settle. There was a burning sensation on the left side of his body, near his heart.

Half an hour later.

The doctor returned to Captain Can’s side.

Doctor:

“How are you feeling?” he asked.

Captain Can:

“The pain has lessened a bit compared to before. Negative things affect me a lot. That’s why I have to close my eyes sometimes. I try not to see” he said.

Doctor:

“When I started traveling in space, I began using calming pills. I used relaxants. If you’d like, you could try calming pills too” he said.

Captain Can fell silent. He was sleepy. He thanked the doctor. The doctor left the vehicle.

Captain Erol had learned what happened from the doctor and contacted the Raindrop vehicle.

Captain Erol:

“Captain Can! How are you?” he asked.

Captain Can:

“I’m a bit better, but the burning in my body continues” he said.

Captain Erol and Can talked for a while.

Captain Can:

“Captain Erol, where are you headed?” he asked.

Captain Erol:

“To the old lands” he said.

Can:

“What do you mean?” he asked.

Erol:

“Years ago, we lived on the Red Planet. Due to drought and the drying up of water sources, we had to migrate from the Red Planet” he said.

Can:

“Did you know? There’s water on the Red Planet” he said.

Captain Erol:

“Water?” he asked.

Can:

“Yes. I’m sending you the coordinates of the water,” he said.

Captain Erol:

“Hooray! This is great news. We’ve learned from our past mistakes. If there’s water where you mentioned, we can use it with better infrastructure and live on this planet again” he said.

Can:

“Hopefully” he said.

Captain Erol received the location of the water source. He thanked Captain Can, and they parted ways.

Captain Can and his friends arrived at the Ant Spacecraft. The doors of the Ant Spacecraft opened. The Raindrop vehicle entered the hangar through the entry corridor. A big surprise awaited them.

THE BIG SURPRISE

The Raindrop vehicle was landing in the hangar.

Captain Can:

“Hey! Friends! Look out the window. There’s a crowd down there” he said.

Gökhan:

“Who are they? I can’t recognize them” he asked.

Captain Can:

“My God! I can’t believe my eyes. That’s Dilek” he said.

Selim:

“Who’s Dilek, Captain?” he asked.

Captain Can:

“My fiancée. They’ve come from Earth” he said.

A wave of joy swept through the vehicle. The people below were waiting excitedly.

Captain Can:

“My mom, dad, siblings! My mother-in-law, father-in-law—they’re all here!” he said.

The Raindrop vehicle touched down. Its landing gear extended, and a bridge connected it to the ground.

Captain Can, Selim, and Gökhan began disembarking from the passenger door of the Raindrop vehicle.

Captain Can:

“What a wonderful surprise! It’s so great to see you all here” he said.

They shook hands with the guests on the ship and caught up with each other.

Dilek:

“Can! We couldn’t get a signal from the ship for a long time. We were so worried about you. We decided to come here together” she said.

Captain Can:

“I’m so glad you came” he said.

Dilek:

“Oh, and on the way here, we encountered Joe’s vehicle. The space police took them away. Henry couldn’t survive his illness and passed away” she said.

Captain Can:

“Really? I’m sorry to hear that” he said.

Selim:

“Let’s not keep our passengers standing. Let’s go inside” he said.

They all went into the lounge together. A few days later, Dilek and Can’s wedding ceremony took place.

Can now had a life partner to share his troubles with. He confided in Dilek about his worries and found relief.

Some time later.

Can recovered from his illness, but sad news awaited them.

CAPTAIN EROL’S DEATH

“Ant Spacecraft! Ant Spacecraft! Can you hear me? Over.”

Ant Spacecraft:

“We hear you. Over” it replied.

Red Planet Living Center:

“This is the Red Planet Living Center. Captain Erol has a request for you! Over” it said.

Captain Can:

“Go ahead! We’re listening” he said.

Living Center:

“Captain Erol is living his final days. He’s ill. He wants to see you. Over” it said.

Captain Can:

“Over! We’re coming to the Red Planet” he said.

The Ant Spacecraft crew, along with their guests from Earth, arrived at the Red Planet.

Captain Erol was lying in a hospital at the Living Center. Our heroes visited him. Captain Erol was overjoyed.

Captain Erol:

“I’m so happy you came” he said.

Captain Erol took long, deep breaths.

Captain Erol:

“Friends! These might be my final hours—I don’t know. As you can see, I’m sick. Everything new grows old, everyone born dies. We’re mortal. We’ll all die one day” he said and fell silent.

The guests were saddened. They looked at him with mournful eyes. After all, even if the whole world came, they couldn’t bring back someone destined to die.

Captain Erol:

“I thank God. I’ve lived a good life. I’ve benefited from many blessings. I’ve tried to be helpful to people too,” he said, then couldn’t speak for a long while.

Captain Can:

“Don’t strain yourself” he said.

Captain Erol:

“I’ll try to speak less. You found the water source you told us about. My request is that you rebuild this planet we ruined” he said.

Captain Can spoke with his wife Dilek and.

Captain Can:

“Don’t worry, Captain Erol! We’ll stay on the Red Planet. We’ll work to make it green again and a livable place once more” he said.

Hearing these words comforted Captain Erol. Joy shone in his eyes.

After hearing this, he said, “Goodbye,” and closed his eyes.

IF YOU CARE FOR IT

Months after Captain Erol’s death.

…

Dilek:

“Can! You made a promise to Captain Erol. What do you plan to do to green the planet?” she asked.

Can:

“I’m thinking of building irrigation channels” he said.

Dilek:

“Can! It’d be better if you started by educating people” she said.

Can:

“Why?” he asked.

Dilek:

“If people understand the benefits of vegetation for themselves, they’ll take better ownership of it” she said.

Can:

“Just its benefits?” he asked.

Dilek:

“Of course, you need to explain both the benefits and the harm properly. There’s a saying in Anatolia, you know: ‘If you care for it, it becomes a vineyard; if you don’t, it becomes a mountain.’ If you have a vineyard, what do you do?” she asked.

Can:

“If you have a vineyard, you eat the delicious grape syrup from those delicate branches” he said.

Dilek:

“You’re right” she said.

Can:

“How do we educate people?” he asked.

Dilek:

“By explaining the importance of ecology—nature science. After all, this planet is our home. Would you rather live in a house with a garden or an apartment?” she asked.

Can:

“Of course, a house with a garden” he said.

Dilek:

“Exactly. If we want to build this planet’s garden, we need to work together. Some of

us should till the soil, some plant seeds, some water it—everyone has a role” she said.

Can:

“What are we waiting for?” he asked.

Dilek:

“Can! We’ve already set out. Even talking about this shows we’re on the way” she said.

Dilek and Can worked to green the Red Planet.

Meanwhile, Selim and Gökhan began researching underground resources, as there were many minerals beneath the surface waiting to be discovered.

Six weeks later.

Irrigation systems were established on the planet. Swampy lands were cleared. Different plant species were planted in the soil. Day by day, the planet began to beautify. The drought on the ASOR planet ended after a year.

A year later.

From space, the planet’s reddish appearance gave way to blue, white, and green. Just as its

appearance changed, so did its name. The Red Planet became the Green Planet.

The time for Captain Can and his friends to leave the ASOR planet was approaching, for they had kept their promise to Captain Erol and made the planet livable. They had lived and worked to establish a habitable place there.

RETURN TO EARTH

The Ant Spacecraft was returning to Earth.

Captain Can:

“Dilek, did you know?” he asked.

Dilek:

“Know what?” she replied.

Captain Can fell silent.

Dilek:

“Hey! I’m going to say something. Why do you keep asking, ‘Did you know?’ I don’t know what’s on your mind” she said.

Captain Can:

“Did you know? I asked just to pique your curiosity” he said.

Dilek:

“Did you know?” she asked this time.

Captain Can:

“Know what?” he replied.

Dilek:

“That asking questions like this makes it harder to communicate with you” she said.

Captain Can:

“You’re right. I have some odd habits. We’re beings who even surprise ourselves sometimes” he said.

Dilek:

“Anyway, let’s talk about this. What are you going to do when we get back to Earth?” she asked.

Can:

“We’re all trying to give meaning to our lives. Some work for self-fulfillment, some for humanity, some for their country—everyone strives to add meaning to their life. Someone might work within their family or for their country. It’d be better if they said, ‘I’m working for both my country’s progress and my family’s sustenance’” he said.

Dilek:

“Okay! What do you think about giving meaning to our lives?” she asked.

Can:

“If I can be a good husband to you, a useful citizen to my country, and most importantly, a good servant to the Creator, I’d be happy” he said.

At that moment, a voice came over the ship’s announcement system:

“Two hours until arrival on Earth.”

Dilek and Can looked out a large window at the universe. Amidst the darkness, there were shimmering stars. Just as we feel joy meeting people or hearing words that light our way on this journey of life, those stars were like people—good people were like stars too.

Dilek:

“Oh! Look, the Moon!” she said.

Can:

“One word: magnificent” he said.

The Ant Spacecraft passed by the Moon. The Moon shone brightly with its glowing face.

The craters on it were like dimples on a beautiful face.

At that moment, Pen Robot approached.

Pen Robot:

“Captain! Hello! How are you?” he asked.

Propeller had taken flight and was hovering in the air.

Propeller:

“Hello, Captain!” he said.

Captain Can:

“Hello, friends! I thank you. Over this long time, you’ve fulfilled your duties perfectly and solved the problem” he said.

Pen Robot:

“Uh, well, Captain, we were programmed for that anyway” he said.

Captain Can:

“Good thing you were. A person should always have a Plan B or C. This ship could

sink—it’s wise to always keep a lifeboat on board. Preparedness is always good” he said.

Propeller:

“Thank God, we got through a tough situation” he said.

Selim and Gökhan raised their hands in greeting.

Selim:

“Captain, we’re nearing the end of our journey. What will you do?” he asked.

Captain Can:

“I’ll hand the Ant Spacecraft over to the authorities. I think I’ve aged a bit. When tough situations arise, my body wears out. I can say this ordeal completely broke my immune system” he said.

Gökhan:

“Where will you go?” he asked.

Captain Can:

“To the village. Now I want to work for the life after death. That’s all” he said.

Everyone fell silent. They heard a sound. It was coming from Earth. They listened closely to this sound…

For centuries, a Davidic voice had been echoing around the Earth. It was a call to Paradise.

THE END OF THE JOURNEY

Our heroes’ travels were nearing their end. They had entered Earth’s atmosphere. Looking out the window, they saw the blue and white Earth below and the starry expanse of space above.

Like all beautiful things, the journey was coming to an end.

Isn’t that so? Youth would fade. Spring would end. Life would run out. Perhaps these were all for the sake of experiencing even more beautiful things…

An egg breaks, and a chick emerges. A seed splits, and a flower blooms. When the white blanket of snow lifts, spring comes to the soil.

Dilek:

“I’m feeling strange emotions—we’ve come home” she said.

Captain Can:

“Our home is Earth” he said.

Dilek:

“What did we learn from this journey?” she asked.

Captain Can:

“What didn’t I learn? Living life simply is so wonderful. Exploring space and seeking new places to live is great, but we must also value Earth” he said.

A voice came over the ship’s announcement system:

“One hour until landing on Earth’s surface”

Selim:

“Captain, thank you for everything. It was a wonderful journey. We learned so much” he said.

Gökhan:

“Yes. We reminisced about memories. We traveled both within our inner worlds and through space” he said.

Below, in the Atlantic Ocean, dolphins were leaping out of the water and diving back in.

The Ant Spacecraft passed by the African continent. The continent had various tree species. The Nile River brought them water. Everything was perfectly designed.

Pen Robot:

“Captain! We may not see each other again. Thank you!” he said.

Propeller thanked him too.

Another announcement came from the Ant Spacecraft:

“Ten minutes until arrival on Earth’s surface”

The spacecraft was reaching Earth’s surface. Captain Can’s hair had turned white. He looked at his reflection in the window. Wrinkles, signs of aging, had appeared around his eyes. His face was like cracked soil with trickling water… Behind his silhouette were mountains and hills. A human is a small universe, and space is a vast human.

Captain Can’s final words were:

“You are Mighty”